Minnesota School for the Blind

Faribault, Minnesota

Thirtieth Biennial Report

1937-1938

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Thirtieth Biennial Report

For the Two Years Ending June 30, 1938

To The

Division of Public Institutions

Minnesota School for the Blind

Report of the Superintendent

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Foreword

The thirtieth biennial report of the Superintendent of the Minnesota School for the Blind is intended to serve as a record of the past two years. It contains information of general interest to the public; it furnishes graduates and former students with a contemporary history of the school.

The Minnesota School for the Blind will celebrate its seventy-fifth anniversary in 1941. Its first class was organized in 1866 with two boys and two girls in attendance. During the biennium covered by this report the average attendance has been about 120.

The school is located on a high bluff overlooking the Straight River and the City of Faribault. Its buildings comprise Dow Hall which includes the adminstrative offices, class rooms, kitchen, dining rooms, dormitories for girls and quarters for some of the employes; two cottages for boys; an industrial building; a hospital; a laundry; boiler room and shops, housed in an extension of Dow Hall; and a superintendent's cottage.

Eleven months of school are provided during the year: Nine for boys and girls six to twenty-one years of age, and two, for the adult blind. The first-named runs from September through May; summer school, during June and July. There is no charge for tuition, board, room, laundry and ordinary medical care.

Eligibility requires state residence, blindness or vision too defective to make progress in public schools possible, and capacity to profit by instruction.

Officers and Teachers

	1936-1937	1937-1938
Superintendent—	J. C. Lysen	J. C. Lysen
Secretary—	Kathryn Schlatter	Kathryn Schlatter
Steward—	F. W. Butterwick	F. W. Butterwick
Principal—	B L. Berhow	B. L. Berhow
Academic Teachers—	Julia Beaumann	Julia Beaumann
	Emeline Brandeen*	Emeline Brandeen*
	Harold Carey	Harold Carey
	Helen Gunderson	Helen Gunderson
	Adelaide Helppie	Adelaide Helppie
	Paul Hoff	Paul Hoff
	Frances Johnson	Frances Johnson
	Marie Lien**	Marie Lien**
	Helen Posz	Helen Posz
	Olive Prine	Olive Prine
	Edna W. Severson	Edna W. Severson
Music Teachers—	Edith Guillemin	Melva Nielsen
	Florence Bieter	Florence Bieter
	M. A. Steppan	M. A. Steppan
Industrial Teachers—	Mabel Bryzel	Mabel Bryzel
	Joseph Grebner	Joseph Grebner
	Alice Leider	Alice Leider
	Torger Lien	Torger Lien
	Isaac Thompson	Isaac Thompson
Physical Training—	Aksel Nielsen	Aksel Nielsen
Librarians—	Mary Heenan	Mary Heenan
		Karsten Ohnstad†
Physician—	F. U. Davis, M. D.	A. W. Nuetzman, M. D.
Ophthalmologist—	John H. Gammell, M. D.	John H. Gammell, M. D.
Nurse—	Inez Voxman, R. N.	Inez Voxman, R. N.
Dietitian—	Julia A. Nelson	Julia A. Nelson
Chief Engineer—	Wayne Saarela	Wayne Saarela

*Instructed in music department also.
**Taught, also, in industrial department.
†Employed by Division of the Blind.

Superintendent's Report

ATTENDANCE

During the biennium, 161 pupils were enrolled in the regular school. Of this number 41 were new admissions, three, readmissions.

1936-1937: The total attendance for the school year was 139, the average attendance, 124. Twenty-one were new admissions, one, a re-admission. Thirty-five students did not return for the 1937-1938 school year for the following reasons: Graduation, eight; over-age or maximum attainment (non-graduates), six; post-graduates, two; mental retardation, eight; voluntary absence, four; transfers to other schools, four; illness, one; sight restored, one; behavior, one.

1937-1938: The total attendance was 126 and the average enrollment, 119. There were 20 new admissions, two readmissions and 22 students did not return for the school year 1938-1939 for the following reasons: Graduation, nine; over-age (non-graduates), one; mental retardation, six; sight restored or too much vision, three; transfers to other schools, one; illness, one; behavior, one.

GRADUATES

Eight were graduated from our high school department on May 28, 1937, and nine on May 26, 1938. They are:

John W. Arvidson, Owatonna, Steele County
Rosie Chupurdia, Calumet, Itasca County
Viola I. Gray, Detroit Lakes, Becker County
Grace Hollander, Cloquet, Carlton County
Philip Imberg, Gilbert, St. Louis County
George Russell Maki, Chisholm, St. Louis County
Vernon Olson, Minneapolis, Hennepin County
Elma Siren, Nashwauk, Itasca County

Francis G. P. Brennan, Sauk Rapids, Benton County
Oscar E. Eskuri, Moose Lake, Carlton County
Minetta V. Johnson, Alexandria, Douglas County
Alexander Neal, Owatonna, Steele County
Leslie O. Olson, Holler, Koochiching County
Oscar Gordon Olson, Minneapolis, Hennepin County
Hazel Marie Rummel, Springfield, Brown County
Lillian A. Vanderwerf, Sleepy Eye, Brown County
Willard W. Workman, Howard Lake, Wright County

AWARDS

The Dr. Dow Scholarship awards were given the following for the school year, 1936-1937: Academic—John Arvidson; Viola Gray; Donald Hunder, Wheaton, Traverse County; Lorraine Hill, Mayer, Carver County; Francis Brennan; Alma Slagster, Raymond, Kandiyohi County; Gordon Olson. Music—Maxine Schwartz, St. Paul, Ramsey County; Lorraine Hill; Leroy Jorgenson, Montevideo, Chippewa County; Donald Dedon, Minneapolis, Hennepin County. Industrial—Elizabeth Cowan, Faribault, Rice County; Odin Hunn, Winnebago, Faribault County.

Awards for the school year, 1937-1938, were: Academic—Francis Brennan, Oscar Eskuri, Gordon Olson, Hazel Rummel and Lillian Vanderwerf. Music—Loretta Ehlers, Faribault, Rice County; Minetta Johnson; Gordon Olson, two awards. Industrial—Nickoli Nelsen, Farmington, Dakota County; Esther Peterson, St. Paul, Ramsey County.

Piano tuning certificates for the school year, 1936-1937, were awarded to Jacob Imberg, Gilbert, St. Louis County and Vernon Dery, Oak Park, Ramsey County. For 1937-1938, piano tuning certificates were given to Oscar Eskuri, Leslie Olson, and Francis Brennan.

Athletic awards for 1936-1937 were presented the following boys and girls for meritorious work in the fields indicated: John Arvidson, chenille letter — tumbling, folk dancing; bronze medal, tumbling. Ralph Aune, Crookston, Polk County, letter—wrestling. Elmo Barnes, Ranier, Koochiching County, silver medal—wrestling champion 150 lbs. Gordon Bloom, Duluth, St. Louis County, letter and bronze medal—tumbling. Lawrence Elias, Hayfield, Dodge county, loving cup—music for department of physical education. Oscar Eskuri, leadership emblem—assisting as leader in physical education and athletics; silver medal—wrestling champion, heavyweight. Wallace Heggestad, Appleton, Swift County, silver medal—wrestling champion 75 lbs. Wayne Heggestad, Appleton, Swift County, letter—wrestling; silver medal—wrestling champion 60 lbs. Jacob Imberg, Gilbert, St. Louis County, letter—tumbling, folk dancing; bronze medal—tumbling. Philip Imberg, letter—folk dancing; bronze medal—tumbling; silver medal—track class B. Arthur Jorgenson, East Grand Forks, Polk County, letter—wrestling. Harris Jorgenson, Montevideo, Chippewa County, leadership emblem—assisting as leader in physical education and athletics. Leroy Jorgenson, letter—wrestling. Edward Lewis, Cook, St. Louis County, letter—folk dancing. Russell Maki, bronze medal—tumbling. Alex Neal, bronze medal—tumbling; silver medal—track class A. George Nelsen,

Farmington, Dakota County, letter—tumbling; bronze medal—tumbling; silver medal—wrestling champion 90 lbs. Nickoli Nelsen, bronze medal—tumbling; silver medal—wrestling champion 105 lbs.; silver medal—track class E. Eugene Otteson, Albert Lea, Freeborn County, letter—wrestling. Myron Pulkrabek, Glencoe, McLeod County, silver medal—track class D. Thomas Rode, Bemidji, Beltrami County, letter—tumbling; bronze medal—tumbling; silver medal—tumbling; silver medal—track class C; leadership emblem—assisting in physical education and athletics. George Stimach, Crosby, Crow Wing County, silver medal—wrestling champion 135 lbs. Louis St. John, Danbury, Wisconsin, Pine County, Minnesota, silver medal—wrestling champion 120 lbs.; letter—wrestling. Joseph Villeburn, Mahnomen, Mahnomen County, letter—wrestling. Willard Workman, bronze medal—tumbling. Ione Auran, Park Rapids, Hubbard County, letter—tap dancing. Jeanette Bourassa, Brainerd, Crow Wing County, gold pin—folk dancing, tap dancing. Florence Grover, Bemidji, Beltrami County, gold pin—folk dancing. Grace Hollander, Cloquet, Carlton County, gold pin—folk dancing. Koyla Kreidler, Herman, Grant County, letter—tap dancing. Margaret Lueck, St. Paul, Ramsey County, silver medal—track class A. Mae Slater, Sacred Heart, Renville County, silver medal—track class C. Lillian Vanderwerf, silver medal—track class B. Gladys West, Winona, Winona County, silver medal—track class D. Marie Williams, Minneapolis, Hennepin County, gold pin—tumbling, folk dancing.

During the school year, 1937-1938, athletic awards were made as follows: Francis Duhaime, Grand Portage, Cook County, chenille letter—wrestling. Donald Moriarty, Belle Plaine, Scott County, chenille letter—track and field; medal—winner class B, track and field; bronze medal—tumbling. Loren Ragan, Redwood Falls, Redwood County, chenille letter—dancing. Norman Kaupanger, Kelliher, Beltrami County, medal—winner class C, track and field. Daisy Nelsen, Farmington, Dakota County, gold pin—track and field. Hazel Rummel, gold pin—dancing. Faith Colvin, Puposky, Beltrami County, medal—winner class C, track and field. Lillian Vanderwerf, medal—given by the Iowa School for the Blind, high point girl in Minnesota-Iowa track meet. Oscar Eskuri, all wool sports jacket for outsanding athletic accomplishment combined with high scholastic achievement.

EDUCATIONAL

This department includes academic, prevocational, music and physical education courses and leads either to an accredited high school graduation or to a semi-academic diploma.

The school year comprises a minimum of thirty-six weeks of instruction in the kindergarten department, the eight elementary grades and four years of high school.

Academic Department

Our academic department is accredited and is practically the same as that in the public schools of the state. Deviations from the courses stipulated by the State Department of Education are necessary only where normal vision is needed, as in chemistry. Oral instruction and talking books, the latter to take care of book reports and lengthy reading assignments, supplement text book work.

The Braille and sight-conservation departments parallel each other. The Braille group consists of children who are totally blind or whose vision is too defective to read print or to use it safely. Generally speaking, the vision of boys and girls in the sight conservation department ranges from 20/200 to 20/70. Text books for the latter are printed in ink in 18 to 24 point type, the size of the average one-column newspaper headline. The school ophthalmologist advises concerning the amount of print reading allowed and passes on all applications for admission to the school.

The percentage of Braille and semi-sighted students during the years of the biennium were as follows:

1936-1937, Braille, 52⅓%; sight saving, 47⅔%
1937-1938, Braille, 56⅓%; sight saving, 43⅔%

Industrial Department

In the vocational department every effort is made to teach handicrafts that will serve as leisure time projects or as trades that will prove financially helpful.

Subjects taught during the school year to the children and to the adult blind in summer are: Piano tuning and repair, upholstering, mattress making, woodwork, rug weaving, basket making, chair caning, tennis racket restringing, hammock and net tying, doormat and bathmat making, hand and machine sewing.

As will be expained later, credit is now given for industrial art courses to apply on a semi-academic graduation.

Music Department

All children, when they reach the fourth grade, are given piano lessons. Those, having little or no musical ability, are dropped after a

reasonable trial. Advance piano instruction, instruction on the pipe organ and on the various band and orchestra instruments follow. Each year the school band and orchestra give from four to five concerts in towns throughout the state in addition to several home programs. Piano and organ pupils have an opportunity to appear in miscellaneous programs and in recitals at the end of the school year.

Vocal instruction is furnished by chorus, glee club and individual lessons. The operetta, "Pickles", was successfully presented in the fall of 1937. A boys' octette earned an "A" rating in the public school district contest in April, 1938, and subsequently competed in the state contest at the University of Minnesota. Vocal recitals are given each spring.

Physical Education

The school needs a gynasium of its own where its physical education program can be properly carried out. The present arrangement of using the School for the Deaf gynasium permits little more than 60 minutes of instruction a week. During favorable weather, physical education is conducted out-of-doors.

In spite of handicaps, our program has been steadily expanded until it includes outdoor track and field events, calisthenics, gymnastics, tumbling, wrestling and folk dancing. Nearly two thousand people witnessed the two public performances in the School for the Deaf gymnasium during the biennium.

Our crack tumbling team made a number of appearances at other large athletic gatherings. In the spring of 1938 the Minnesota School met the Iowa School for the Blind at Vinton in a dual track meet. Our school is a member of the National Athletic Association of the Schools for the Blind and competes each year in its telegraphic track meet. Awards for athletic prowess and proficiency are made at the annual dinner sponsored by the school's athletic council.

Semi-Academic Graduation

This title is used in lieu of a better name. It indicates a plan now in effect whereby students unable to meet requirements of 16 credits for an academic graduation from our high school department, may elect to make certain substitutions so as to qualify for a semi-academic diploma. According to this plan eight required credits in the academic department can be supplemented with eight credits earned in the industrial, music and physical education departments.

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The need of activities to compensate for protracted absence from home is evidenced by the fact that a boy or girl, starting in our kindergarten department and continuing through the grades and high school, spends 117 months at our school and only 36 months at home. These activities, planned and informal, are designed to further religious life, mental health, emotional stability, poise and ability to make worthwhile use of leisure time.

Religious Instruction

Participation in the worship and work of the local churches is encouraged. Each Sunday morning our 35-passenger bus maintains a regular schedule between the school and Faribault churches. Sunday school and worship is further supplemented by Saturday morning instruction at the school under the personal direction of a Protestant and a Catholic chaplain.

Social Activities

These take the form of Boy and Girl Scout projects, theater parties, picnics, sleigh rides, afternoon play and games, indoor parties of all kinds, dances for the older children, the Junior-Senior prom, etc.

Ample opportunity is also given our boys and girls to mingle with the public. During the school year, 1937-1938, this included: An operetta, choral competition in the district and state contests, band and orchestra tours, gymnastic exhibitions and physical education demonstrations.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

The school hospital is in charge of a registered nurse and is well equipped to care for the ordinary medical needs of our children. The school physician, subject to call, answers promptly all summons. Sickness during the biennium was held to a minimum. Routine treatments for dyspepsia, colds and the like were reduced to one-third as compared to the previous two-year period. This may be accounted for largely because of our physical education program and the subsequent better physical fitness of our boys and girls.

In the fall of 1936 a thorough-going program of treatments for syphilis was inaugurated. Wassermann blood tests were made on all students and intravenous and intramuscular injections substituted for

the less effective "mercury rubs". Fourteen boys and girls were treated during the biennium; several showed improvement of vision while under treatment. One boy responded so well that with mildly corrective glasses he was able to return to his home with normal vision.

All first admissions are given Wassermann and mantoux tests, and are inoculated and vaccinated. Other medical care includes tonsillectomies and various types of operations on the eyes. During the last school year, 86 % of the student body had had all needed dental work done.

OPHTHALMOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT

Following were the causes of defective vision among the students in attendance at the school during the biennium, given in the order of their prevalence: Optic atrophy, twenty-six cases (six because of syphilis); cataract, twenty-five; traumatic injuries (accidents), fourteen; myopia, eleven; albinism, ten; glaucoma, interstitial keratitis (caused by syphilis) and choroiditis, seven each; arrested development, six; chorioretinitis, five; refractive error, strabismus, corneal ulcers and opacity, and retinitis pigmentosa, four each; aniridia and ophthalmia neonatorum, three each; coloboma, dislocated lens, uveitis and neoplasm, two each; birth anomaly, megalophthalmus, microphthalmus, panophthalmus, bulbar phthisis, keratitis (from syphilis), phlegmonic ulcers, homonymous hemianopsia, and nystagmus, one each. Three cases are listed as miscellaneous; one new admission's eyes showed no pathology and the child was returned home.

The work of our oculist was reviewed by a number of ophthalmolgists who attended two eye clinics sponsored at the school in April, 1937.

Several students received considerable restoration of sight because of care and treatment of eyes and operations during the two-year period. A boy, vision restored to normal because of treatments for syphilitic condition; a boy, classification changed from "blind" to sighted because of needling operations on cataracts (20/20 vision in one eye); a girl, Braille student in her senior year, now has 80% vision in one eye; a girl, eyes operated on for cataracts, classification changed from Braille to sight saving and can possibly attend public school; a girl, practically blind, operated on for cataracts, learned print alphabet in senior year and now can read some newspaper print; a girl, further loss of sight prevented by care, now attending public high school.

LIBRARY

The library at the Minnesota School for the Blind serves a dual

purpose; it provides a wide range of reading material for the student body and it furnishes Braille books and talking book records for the adult blind in this state, the Dakotas and Eastern Montana. The last-named service was made available under the Pratt-Smoot Law, whereby our school library was designated a depository of the Library of Congress. Under this arrangement, our library receives each year more than 500 volumes in Braille (text books not included) without cost to the State of Minnesota.

An added federal appropriation has furnished the library with a large collection of talking book records. From January 1, 1937, to January 1, 1938, the total number of containers (holding 12 to 15 records) rose from 134 to 466. In a year's time the circulation is about ten times greater than the number of records catalogued.

Braille books and Talking Book records pass through the mails free of charge. In September, 1937, the Division of the Blind, St. Paul, furnished the school with an assistant to aid in the handling of outside circulation.

SUMMER SCHOOL

During the summer school session of 1937, 30 men and 14 women attended; 17 were new admissions. Thirty-five men and 12 women attended the 1938 summer session; 12 were new admissions.

The entire industrial faculty remains during June and July so as to provide a wide range of vocational subjects. This is supplemented with Braille reading and writing, and typewriting. The only cost to the adult blind is travel and personal expenses.

The Minnesota School for the Blind was the first residential school in the United States to establish summer school. This was in 1907.

HIGHER EDUCATIONAL AID

The School for the Blind serves as a trustee of the higher educational aid fund which the legislature appropriates for the specific purpose of giving financial help to young blind men and women to continue their studies after high school. The law provides that a maximum of $300 a year may be granted to a deserving student; no more than ten such grants may be made in any one school year.

Applications of prospective trainees are carefully considered by a committee. Where necessary the facilities of the testing bureau, University of Minnesota, are called on to help determine the applicant's aptitude for advanced study.

IMPROVEMENTS

A continuous program of repairs and replacements was carried out during the biennium as follows: All dormitories in East and West Cottages were redecorated; the piano practice rooms in East Cottage were redecorated and better illumination provided; dormitories in West Cottage were re-wired for better light and to furnish radio outlets; the exterior brick work on Dow Hall was pointed up and windows re-caulked under a WPA project; the Industrial building was painted through WPA; a steel service stairway at the rear of Dow Hall was built to replace an unsafe wooden structure; all shelving in the library was rearranged and an added reading room provided; a talking book library to hold 10,000 records was built and a text-book library set up in connection with the principal's office; school drives were resurfaced with tarvia; painting included four tubular fire escapes, the kindergarten room, the interior of the large school refrigerator and hallways in Dow Hall; slate roof on Dow Hall and the two cottages were repaired and a garage for the school bus erected; a new road past the school was constructed by the highway department (the old road on state property is now used for a slide in the winter time); the former coal bunker was made into a stock room for maintenance and engineer's supplies.

Respectfully submitted,
J. C. Lysen,
Superintendent.